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1961/04/18

Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State

14 Moscow, April 18, 1961, 2 p.m.

11 2550.

Not to be published

FOLLOWING LETTER TO PRESIDENT KENNEDY FROM KHRUSHCHEV HANDED ME BY ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER SEVCHENKO AT 12:15 TODAY. BEGIN TEXT:

- (U) MR. PRESIDENT, I SEND YOU THIS MESSAGE IN AN HOUR OF ALARM, DRAUGHT WITH DANGER FOR THE PEACE OF THE WHOLE WORLD. ARMED AGGRESSION HAS BEGUN AGAINST CUBA. IT IS A SECRET TO NO ONE THAT THE ARMED BANDS INVADING THIS COUNTRY WERE TRAINED, EQUIPPED AND ARMED, IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. THE PLANES WHICH ARE BOMBING CUBAN CITIES BELONG TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE BOMBS THEY ARE DROPPING ARE BEING SUPPLIED BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.
- (U) ALL OF THIS EVOKES HERE IN THE SOVIET UNION AN UNDERSTANDABLE FEELING OF INDIGNATION ON THE PART OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND THE SOVIET PEOPLE.
- (U) ONLY RECENTLY, IN EXCHANGING OPINIONS THROUGH OUR RESPECTIVE REPRESENTATIVES, WE TALKED WITH YOU ABOUT THE MUTUAL DESIRE OF BOTH SIDES TO PUT FORWARD JOINT EFFORTS DIRECTED TOWARD IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES AND ELIMINATING THE DANGER OF WAR. YOUR STATEMENT A FEW DAYS AGO THAT THE USA WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN MILITARY ACTIVITIES AGAINST CUBA, CREATED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE TOP LEADERS OF THE UNITED STATES WERE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CONSEQUENCES FOR GENERAL PEACE AND FOR THE USA ITSELF WHICH AGGRESSION AGAINST CUBA COULD HAVE.

43 Source: Department of State, *Residential Correspondence*, 210 Files, Lot 77 D 163, Pen Pal Series, 1961-1964, Special US-USSR File, 1961. Secret; Nisut; Received in the Department on April 18 at 8:53 a.m. Limit Distribution. The Embassy also reported that a demonstration against U.S. involvement in Cuba began outside the Embassy at 2:35 p.m. local time. *Telegram 2552 from Moscow, April 18; (old, Central Files, 737.00/4-1861)* The Soviet government released the text of the letter to the press at the same time that it was presented to the Embassy in Moscow. *It* the text of the letter is also printed in Department of State Bulletin, May 8, 1961, p. 662. *Aminov and Zubin read the text of Khrushchev's letter to the press in the first Committee on April 18. (U.S. dic. A 2/5/61.1153)*

See footnote 3, Document 11. *100-1153-1153*

HOW CAN WHAT IS BEING DONE BY THE UNITED STATES IN REALITY BE UNDERSTOOD, WHEN AN ATTACK ON CUBA HAS NOW BECOME A FACT?

- (U) IT IS STILL NOT LATE TO AVOID THE IRREPARABLE. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USA STILL HAS THE POSSIBILITY OF NOT ALLOWING THE FLAME OF WAR IGNITED BY INTERVENTIONS IN CUBA TO GROW INTO AN INCOMPARABLE CONFLAGRATION. I APPROACH YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, WITH AN URGENT CALL TO PUT AN END TO AGGRESSION AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA. MILITARY ARMAMENT AND THE WORLD POLITICAL SITUATION ARE SUCH AT THIS TIME THAT ANY SO-CALLED "LITTLE WAR" CAN TOUCH OFF A CHAIN REACTION IN ALL PARTS OF THE GLOBE.

- AS FAR AS THE SOVIET UNION IS CONCERNED, THERE SHOULD BE NO MISTAKE ABOUT OUR POSITION: WE WILL RENDER THE CUBAN PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERNMENT ALL NECESSARY HELP TO REPEL ARMED ATTACK ON CUBA. WE ARE SINCERELY INTERESTED IN A RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION, BUT IF OTHERS PROCEED TOWARD SHARPENING, WE WILL ANSWER THEM IN FULL MEASURE. AND IN GENERAL IT IS HARDLY POSSIBLE SO TO CONDUCT MATTERS THAT THE SITUATION IS SETTLED IN ONE AREA AND CONFLAGRATION EXTINGUISHED, WHILE A NEW CONFLAGRATION IS IGNITED IN ANOTHER AREA.

- 11 I NOTE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USA WILL CONSIDER OUR VIEWS
DICTATED BY THE SOLE CONCERN NOT TO ALLOW STEPS WHICH COULD LE
THE WORLD TO MILITARY CATASTROPHY. END TEXT.

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